

Human Services Funding Committee / Community Development Committee (CDC)
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT PUBLIC HEARING
December 8, 2009

Committee Members Attending:

Jana McClure, Mary Jane Laus, Paulette Brooks, Claude Tellier, Lewis Rudolph

Town Staff:

Roy Rosenblatt

Absent Committee Members:

Isaac BenEzra,

Public Attending:

Hwei-Ling Greeney, Committee on Homelessness; Reikka Simla, Chair Amherst Committee on Homelessness; Jon Nelms, Amherst Committee on Homelessness; Donna Crabtree, Amherst Housing Authority; Cheryl Zoll, Amherst Survival Center; Joe Henefeld, Service Net; Lawrence Shaffer, Amherst Town Manager; Jeffrey Bagg, Amherst Planning Department; Joanne Campbell, Valley Community Development Corporation; Linda Chalfant, Leisure Services and Supplemental Education.

Handouts: CDC listing of proposed capital projects and social service program; Committee on Homelessness Memorandum: Recommendations on CDBG social service priorities and capital spendings; Amherst Housing Authority Memorandum: Community Development Block Grant Program funds – Public Hearing December 8, 2009.

The Public Hearing for the Community Development Block Grant [CDBG] funding began at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, December 8, 2009 in the First Floor Meeting Rm of Town Hall, Amherst, MA. Paulette Brooks, co-chair, called the meeting to order and welcomed those present. After introductions around the room, Ms. Brooks pronounced that the committee has opened the floor to the public to hear their input on recommendations for CDBG 2010 spending proposals. The public was informed that presentations were not to exceed 5 minutes.

Reikka Simla, chair Amherst Committee on Homelessness, and Hwei-Ling Greeney, Amherst Committee on Homelessness presented a memo with recommendations for 4 proposals. Three social service recommendations: Funds for a year-round resource center for low-income or homeless - \$80,000, Funds for seasonal emergency shelter - \$40,000, Funds for emergency rental and fuel assistance for families and individuals - \$25,000. One capital spending recommendation: Funds for the acquisition or rehabilitation of permanent housing for homeless individuals - \$400,000. For more detailed information please refer to the memo. **Note:** Ms. Greeney called for a correction in the CDC listing of proposals. Where stated under the heading of Social Service the Committee on Homelessness Request line item Emergency Shelter/Warming Place is changed to solely state Emergency Shelter.

Donna Crabtree, Amherst Housing Authority, presented a memo proposing the rehabilitation of 22 public housing units. The proposal's project description detailed two phases of action. Ms. Crabtree requested the CDC to attend to the Project Description – Phase 1: Stanley, Jenks, and Olympia. The proposal states there are 10 units across 5 duplex structures in need of rehabilitation. The AHA is requesting \$600,000 in CDBG capital funds. For more detailed information please refer to the memo.

Cheryl Zoll, Amherst Survival Center, requested \$19,000 from the CDBG social service funds for a Family Night project. Ms. Zoll states that the project is currently only able to serve approximately 30% of the families in need. The Survival Center would redesign the program to

allow for Family Night to occur 2x a month. The increased occurrence would increase the number of families served.

Laurence Shaffer, Amherst Town Manager, requested CDBG funds spent on a feasibility study to discern the needs for blighted properties. In specific, the properties require to pass a Health Code Inspection and the study would provide clarity of the need in order to pass inspection.

Jeffrey Bagg, Amherst Planning Department, requested funds related to rehabilitating the blighted properties identified in the feasibility study mentioned by the Town Manager. Additionally, Mr. Bagg proposed funding for sidewalk reconstruction ensuring that public and private facilities are accessible to individuals of differing abilities as mentioned in the 2010 Amherst Community Development Strategy plan.

Joanne Campbell, Valley Community Development Corporation, proposed that funds be set aside for the First-Time Homebuyer Program.

Linda Chalfant, Leisure Services and Supplemental Education, proposed funds be set aside for after school programming for grades kindergarten through 6th grade with a possible expansion into the middle school grades.

Roy Rosenblatt, CDC Town Liaison, presented project proposals itemized on the list that did not have a representative present.

At 6:25 pm Paulette Brooks requested the public to bring forth any other proposals before closing out the hearing. At this request, there were no other proposals presented. The public hearing was closed at this time.

From 6:25 to 6:55 the CDC open the floor to a general discussion.

The next meeting of the Community Development Committee will be Tuesday 12/15/2009 at 5pm and Monday 12/21/2009 at 5:00 p.m. Location will be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jana McClure